CHRA-E INFORMATION EXPRESS

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Welcome to this latest issue of the CHRA-E Information Express. The intent of this publication is to disseminate information of interest to managers, supervisors, and civilian employees serviced by the CHRA – Europe Region.

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Civilian Human Resource Professionals Supporting the Army's Mission Through Excellence and Partnership

INTEGRITY – CARING – SERVICE – ADAPTABILITY – QUALITY - PARTNERSHIP

DIRECTOR'S CORNER
Lisa J. Lessard

Army civilians have a unique opportunity to support the Army mission and our brave Soldiers. Army civilians, including members of the Civilian Human Resources (CHR) community, serve proudly at home and downrange supporting the Global War on Terrorism.

Employment of veterans, who have made personal sacrifices to serve our country and defend our democratic principles, is a priority of this administration. Veterans bring valuable skills and competencies and have long been a vital source of candidates for filling Federal jobs. The Army is proud of its record – a leader in hiring the nation's veterans, particularly disabled veterans.

In April 2004 the Department of the Army announced the Disabled Soldiers Support System (DS3). In the spirit of the Army's Warrior Ethos *"I will never leave a fallen comrade"*, this initiative provides severely disabled soldiers a system of advocacy, follow-up and personal support.

DS3 integrates multiple existing programs to provide holistic support services for severely disabled Soldiers and their families. One component will provide assistance to Soldiers interested in becoming an Army civilian. The HR community will participate in assisting these special heroes as they transition from military to civilian life. To learn more about this program check out the web site at: http://www.army.mil/ds3/.

Make the CHRA-Europe website your first stop for civilian personnel information.
Check it out today at:

http://www.chra.eur.army.mil/

CPOC Establishes New CFT

The CPOC stood up a new Customer Focus Team (CFT) on 24 January 2005. The new CFT services the Mannheim and Stuttgart areas. The new team structure allows for increased customer support, ease in processing recruitment and classification actions, and a balanced servicing population. Ms. Isabel Reyes, formerly of the Hanau CPAC, joins the CPOC as the new CFT Chief.

Merit Promotion and Placement Regulation

The CHRA Europe Region Merit Promotion and Placement Plan has been published as Army in Europe regulation, AER 690-300.335.1, Merit Promotion and Placement, dated 1 February 2005. It is available on the Library of Army in Europe Publications and Forms at: https://www.aeaim.hqusareur.army.mil/library/reg/aer690-00.335.1.htm. It may also be accessed via the CHRA-Europe website under Management Tools/Recruitment and PPP.

Compensatory Time Off for Travel

Section 203 of the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-411, October 30, 2004) authorized a new form of compensatory time off for time spent by an employee in a travel status away from the employee's official duty station when such time is not otherwise compensable. The regulations implementing the new form of compensatory time off for time in a travel status became effective January 28, 2005.

Supervisors/timekeepers will need to manually track compensatory time for travel via a spreadsheet until the Defense Finance and Accounting System is updated. Projection for the system update is June 2005.

See *What's New* on the CHRA-Europe website at http://www.chra.eur.army.mil for more information.

TSP Open Seasons

Public Law 108-469, signed on 21 Dec 04, eliminates the Thrift Savings Plan open seasons and the restrictions on contribution elections which are tied to open seasons. The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board will implement this law on 1 Jul 05. There will be one more open season, 15 Apr through 30 Jun 05.

Civilian Emergency Contact Database

Are you registered?

Is your registration current?

The Army developed an automated emergency contact data base system as a result of the lessons learned from the September 11th terrorist attacks. The civilian emergency contact database is a confidential, web-based resource for quick access to your emergency contacts.
For more information or to register, visit the CHRA-E website and click on Emergency Contact Data.

Registration in the Emergency Contact Database (ECD) is mandatory for all U.S. civilian employees deploying in support of contingency operations. Supervisors and managers should ensure that **all** U.S. civilian employees are briefed on the ECD and encouraged to register. Currently, only about 27% of our civilian population is registered in the ECD. All U.S. Appropriated Fund and Non-Appropriated fund employees are encouraged to register by 15 January 2005.   Those employees who have already registered should check to be sure their registration is accurate.

NAF Vacancy Announcements

On January 1, 2005, all CHRA-E NAF Human Resources Offices began posting NAF vacancy announcements on the Department of the Army Vacancy Announcement Board (VAB) on the CPOL (Civilian Personnel On-Line) website. The announcements are still accessible via the NAF Employment page on the CHRA-E web site, as well as, through the Employment section of the CPOL website.

The application process has not changed.

NAF Job Application Kit

A NAF Job Application Kit is now available on the CHRA-E website. The kit was developed by CHRA-E to coincide with the posting of NAF Vacancy Announcements on the VAB, and provides a wealth of information to assist NAF job applicants.

To view the kit, visit the NAF section under the employment link on the CHRA-E web site.

ERP Coordinator Training

On 11 and 12 January 2005, the Civilian Personnel Operations Center - Europe partnered with Installation Management Agency - Europe to provide training to the Employment Readiness Program (ERP) Coordinators at IMA-E Training Center.

The training centered on providing information on overseas employment and included a demonstration of RESUMIX. Specific topics covered were Military Spouse Preference, Family Member Preference, Employment Categories, Area of Consideration, how to read an announcement, how to develop a successful resume, LN employment procedures, and the CPOC responsibilities with Management and the Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers (CPAC). The ERP's were also provided a quick overview of the CHRA web-site. Emphasis was placed on the areas of most importance and resources available to ERPs to enable them to better assist their customers.

This is the first of a series of training opportunities planned for ERPS and Managers. The feedback from this pilot presentation of this new training module will be used in the development of a standard training module for use throughout the CHRA-Europe Region.

Performance Appraisals

A quick reminder for managers and supervisors regarding performance appraisals:

31 Jan 05 Base System Rating Cycle Ends
(GS 6-8, WS 6 thru 8 and equivalent,
WG 6 and above, and all WL)

Army Deploys CPOL Portal

The Army made it easier for civilian employees and supervisors to access vital Human Resource (HR) tools and information by deploying the new Army Civilian Personnel Online Portal on 20 December 2004. The portal has it all in one place, with one login, and is made up of three main sections:

The **Employment** section is rich in information for job seekers and current Army civilian employees who just need to find important information. It includes job search functions, resume building, non-appropriated fund (NAF) employment information, frequently asked questions (FAQ), and much more.

The **References and Tools** section contains a very comprehensive reference library on any and all aspects of Army civilian personnel. If you need information, here is where you'll find it.

Behind the **Employee Portal** lie automated tools for employees, managers and Army HR specialists, to include a modernized version of the Army Regional Toolset (ART). Automated tools used by employees, such as MyPay, Vacancy Announcement Board, Resume Builder, Emergency Contact Database, and Answer are available in one convenient location. Soon, an Employee Data section will be added which will allow Army civilian employees to view their official personnel information online. Employees, managers and Army HR Specialists will use their AKO log-in capability to access the Employee Portal.

The current version of ART will remain active through the end of February 2005, to allow managers and Army HR specialists time to visit and learn about the new portal.

VISIT THE PORTAL at: http://acpol.army.mil and begin exploring its features.

Automation Problems

Undoubtedly the problems that we have been experiencing with some of our automated applications have come to your attention. These problems are of grave concern to us since they directly impact our ability to provide timely and accurate service in support of you our customer and the important Army missions you support.

Like the rest of the Army we have been striving to comply with the current Army Knowledge Management (AKM) Mandate. A number of our problems are directly related to that effort. Our objective is to fix the problems while maintaining compliance with the AKM mandates. We will do everything we can to accomplish this objective in the least disruptive manner possible.

CHRA would like to apologize for any problems that these events have caused and thank you for your patience and support.

> "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at time of challenges and controversy."   ***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***
>
> *(from 1001 Motivational Quotes for Success)*

LN REFERRAL LISTS
(Within Germany)

As of January 3, 2005, local national referral lists, within Germany, are mailed from the Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) directly to the manager. The LN gatekeeper for recruit/fill actions were modified to prompt the manager to provide a German postal address for this purpose.

The CPOC will use the address that is indicated in the gatekeeper. If an organization wishes all LN referral lists to come to a central personnel liaison office, or anywhere else, that complete address must be provided in the gatekeeper.

EMPLOYMENT CORNER
This section is designed to familiarize readers with employment terms, tools, and processes.

Army Resume Builder
(https://cpolst.belvoir.army.mil/public/resumebuilder/builder/index.jsp)

In the last issue, the Army Job Application Kit was discussed. After reviewing the information contained in the Kit its time to start building a resume using the Army Resume Builder. Using this interactive tool ensures that all of the required information is provided. Only one resume is need in the database to apply for any job using the Army's automated application process. Note: You can only use the Army Resume Builder to apply for U.S. Appropriated Fund positions.

On January 26, 2005, a new version of the Army civilian Resume Builder/ANSWER tool deployed. The deployment of the new Resume Builder modernizes, simplifies and shortens the application process. The new tool combines both the Resume Builder and ANSWER into one application providing a number of benefits to applicants.

Users with existing Resume Builder and ANSWER accounts should log in as "Registered Users" when first accessing the new Resume Builder/ANSWER application. Users will then be prompted to verify/update their registration information. Resumes from the old resume builder did not move into the new resume builder.

Enhancements and features of the new Resume Builder / ANSWER are:

- Army Civilian Resume Builder and ANSWER now together under one login process.

- Capability to toggle between Resume Builder and ANSWER.

- User friendly/Menu driven - no more scrolling down one long page.

- Enhanced copy, cut, and paste capability - able to copy from ANSWER and paste into Resume Builder.

- Worksheet formats available for work experience, education and additional information - puts information in proper format.

- New job experience entries will automatically be entered at the beginning of the resume.

- One large box for job experience versus six individual boxes - allows for more flexibility.

- Up to 12,000 characters for job experience description.

- Status tracking enhanced - only last 25 entries displayed, with option to view more.

- Enhanced "Help Menus" available for applicant's use.

FEATURE SECTION

This section is designed to provide information about the different components of CHRA-E.

KAISERSLAUTERN CPAC

The Kaiserslautern Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) is located in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC), which is near the edge of the famous German Pfalz forest. The KMC is the largest military community outside the continental United States, consisting of Army and Air Force components. Twenty-two CPAC employees provide service to a population of over 4,600 appropriated and non-appropriated fund employees stationed in and around the KMC. Although the CPAC services non-Army units such as DECA, DODDS, and DFAS, 90% of the employees serviced by the CPAC are employed by Army. Approximately 67% of the serviced population is Local National (LN) and the largest customer is the 21st Theater Support Command, which represents 51% of the civilian employees serviced by the CPAC.

The CPAC provides onsite advice and assistance to managers and employees and works closely with customers to support their civilian personnel needs. This can be challenging even in a stable environment. But overseas, at a time when the Army is fighting a war on terrorism, the task can be overwhelming. For example, in 2004, the Kaiserslautern CPAC was called upon by the General Support Center Europe to fill 77 LN positions in less than 30 days. Compare this to the total combined US and LN recruitment for the Kaiserslautern CPAC, which normally varies between 20 and 60 actions each month. To accomplish the task, they looked beyond the normal recruitment process of putting out announcements and collecting applications. Instead, they partnered with the German Labor Office to find highly qualified candidates who were available to begin work on short notice. The result was all the LN positions were filled and the General Support Center Europe was able to accomplish their mission.

Although downsizing and realignments are seldom pleasant, through efforts such as retraining programs and round table discussions in cooperation with the German Ministry of Interior Affairs, separations can be reduced. In 2004, 4 separate reductions in force (RIF) were effected in organizations serviced by the Kaiserslautern CPAC. Approximately 260 employees were impacted. Beginning with the early planning stages, the CPAC was heavily involved in the process and sought ways to minimize the losses caused by the RIFs. Finding jobs for displaced employees quickly became the major focus. Through combined efforts of CPAC, CPOC, the German government and local management, the number of employees involuntarily separated was eventually reduced to 11.

One of the biggest day-to-day challenges facing the CPAC is providing service to a population scattered throughout the KMC and beyond. The CPAC office is located on Pulaski Barracks. But, there are eight different Army installations that stretch from the east side of Kaiserslautern to the south of Pirmasens. Additionally, DECA customers are serviced from the Kaiserslautern CPAC in locations as far away as Cairo Egypt and Lajes Portugal. The importance of automation is evident. To meet the challenge, the CPAC offers ongoing computer training and onsite automation assistance. In 2004, the CPAC hosted eight separate formal training sessions for managers and employees in the use of civilian personnel automated tools. This training was above and beyond the training given as part of the US and LN Supervisory courses held once a year and the one-on-one sessions provided individually. The CPAC is committed to automation and to the training necessary to make it work.

The Kaiserslautern CPAC is a valued member of the KMC. The CPAC employees strive to provide the best possible service and are recognized by their customers as a success because of their hard work and dedication. It is a pleasure to highlight their contributions to the KMC, CHRA-E and Department of Army. Thanks for all you do Kaiserslautern!

COMMENTS

We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Send comments to the CHRA-Europe Regional Director's Office at:
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